

Stung by Problems

Beekkeepers: They're Not All in Clover

By MARK A. STEIN, Times Staff Writer

MOCCASIN, Calif.—Swiftly and silently, the deadly, stinging toxin swarmed over the compact wood-frame structure, instantly dooming the tiny agricultural workers inside.

The end came so suddenly that the victims probably never knew what happened. But Bruce Beekman knew. As soon as he saw the millions of corpses, he knew.

Someone had rubbed out his bees.

As a turf war, the assault last month near the Don Pedro Reservoir 110 miles east of San Francisco might not rank with the St. Valentine's Day Massacre. But it has set the bee world to buzzing and it gives outsiders a peek inside the increasingly competitive world of beekeeping.

Variety of Woes

It is a world that seems by its very nature to be pastoral and relaxed, but which actually is honeycombed with problems, from cut-rate honey imports and an influx of bee parasites to shrinking California orange groves and bad weather.

The result, beekeepers say, is keener competition and shorter tempers, which can result in telephoned threats, bee rustling—and, as Bruce Beekman learned, the occasional hive "hit."

"I don't think the public realizes just how cutthroat the business gets," said biologist Marian Anzer of the Tuolumne County agricultural commissioner's office. "The beekeeping industry is a very tight business, and when somebody gets beat out on a contract, the only way to get back is to sabotage the other guys' bees. It happens quite often."

"Sure, I've been threatened, my family has been threatened, we've all been threatened," said Steve Park, a leading beekeeper and breeder in Palo Cedro, Calif., a small town east of Redding near the Oregon border.

Potential Profits

Behind the skulduggery is the obscure lure of beekeeping. Not only do bees make honey—\$14.9 million worth last year in California—they also pollinate about 50 crops, from almonds and oranges to cotton and alfalfa. This earns California's estimated 300 commercial beekeepers another \$12 million annually. California also is a major supplier of bee "packages," or starter colonies, to other states.

With such high stakes and growing problems, the competition sometimes turns deadly—for the bees, anyway.

In the Beekman case, apian autopsy by the California Department of Food and Agriculture in Sacramento revealed last week that the bee killers used a potent pesticide called chlorpyrifos. Gera Curry of that state agency said tests showed the dead bees had received an ample dose of the toxin.

Chlorpyrifos is the active ingredient in two name-brand commercial products—an exterminator-type structural pesticide called Lorsban and a wide-spectrum agricultural pesticide called Dursban.

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Associated Press

Skipper Dennis Conner signals victory from the helm of Stars & Stripes on the final downwind

leg of the deciding America's Cup race; Australia's Kookaburra III is in the distance.

Stanford Seeks \$1.1 Billion for Its Centennial

By WILLIAM TROMBLEY, Times Staff Writer

STANFORD—Stanford University formally launched on Wednesday what officials said is the largest fund-raising effort undertaken by an American university, a \$1.1-billion Centennial Campaign scheduled to last 4½ years.

Although a centennial observance ordinarily lasts only one year, Stanford plans a "centennial period" from now until Oct. 1, 1991, which will be the 100th anniversary of the opening of the university.

The money will be used to build new facilities for teaching and research in engineering and science, to endow an additional 100 professorships and to improve undergraduate education, President Donald Kennedy told reporters in a briefing on the Stanford campus.

Additional Amount

Of the \$1.1 billion, \$533 million would have been raised in any case through regular annual gift campaigns, so \$567 million is the additional amount that must be found.

The largest single portion of this \$567 million—\$180 million—will be used to build a 41-acre "near west" campus that will house most of the university's science and engineering departments.

"This is very badly needed space," said James F. Gibbons, dean of the School of Engineering. "There are important experiments that can't be done in our present buildings because they're outmoded and often don't have proper

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San Diego Sees Its Cup Running Over After Victory

By RALPH FRAMMOLINO, Times Staff Writer

SAN DIEGO—With pride in their hearts and dollar signs in their eyes, San Diego business and civic leaders Wednesday cheered the recapture of the America's Cup yachting prize and huddled late into the day to plan a public celebration to welcome home Stars & Stripes skipper Dennis Conner and his crew.

Conner is scheduled to return home to a triumphant San Diego welcome sometime between noon and 6 p.m. Saturday, Mayor Maureen O'Connor said. Conner's decision to bring the cup to San Diego, before heading on to celebrations in New York and at the White House, "says a lot about San Diegans' commitment to San Diego," the mayor added.

Conner's overwhelming victory over the Australian entry—a stroke of personal revenge for

Please see CUP, Page 26

Iran Says It Will Let Seib Leave Today

By NORMAN KEMPSTER, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—Iran announced Wednesday that it will free Wall Street Journal reporter Gerald F. Seib "as soon as interrogations are complete" and permit him to leave the country today.

Iran's official news organizations, Tehran radio and the Islamic Republic News Agency, said Seib will be expelled and will not be allowed to return.

The State Department and the Wall Street Journal both said they have received no confirmation of the reports. However, there seemed to be no reason to doubt the dispatches of the government-owned radio and news service.

Seib, 30, went to Iran along with more than 50 other reporters at the invitation of the government to visit the Iran-Iraq War front and cover several Iranian press conferences. He was arrested Saturday

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WEATHER

Sunny and warmer today. Clear tonight. Variable high cloudiness Friday.

	Low	High
Wednesday	52	73
Today's forecast	53	near 70
Friday's forecast	mid-50s	upper 70s
Feb. 4 last year	52	70s

Record low Feb. 4, 1883	32
Record high Feb. 4, 1967	84

Complete details, Part II, Page 2.

U.S. Plays Down Naval Buildup Off Lebanon

By GAYLORD SHAW, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—The White House cautioned Wednesday against speculation that military action is imminent in the Middle East's continuing hostage crisis despite the gathering of a larger-than-usual U.S. naval force off the coast of Lebanon.

Pentagon officials said a five-ship amphibious assault force carrying helicopters and 1,900 Marines is en route from Spain to join a flotilla of about 30 other ships, including two aircraft carriers, now operating in the eastern Mediterranean.

The Navy usually maintains about 25 combat ships in the region, said one source, who described the deployment of additional ships as precautionary.

Speculation Discouraged

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater, while not ruling out the possibility of a military strike, sought to discourage such suggestions.

"I can't speculate on any future course of action," Fitzwater said in response to questions. "We always do have substantial forces in the area, but I would urge not to speculate along those lines."

At another point during the White House briefing, he said that "I would urge a little downgrading of the speculation" that the marshaling of naval forces foreshadows military action.

"Our forces are there on what in many ways is normal activities and operations. . . . The forces are there to protect our strategic interests and to support our friends in the region," he said, urging reporters not "to jump to any conclusions about any military activities."

The buildup of U.S. forces in the area began in recent weeks when a new wave of kidnappings increased to eight the number of Americans believed held hostage by terrorists in Lebanon.

The carrier battle group consisting of the flattop John F. Kennedy

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Congress Rejects Clean Water Veto

Senate Votes 86 to 14 for Override; Loss of Reagan's Clout Discounted

By JIM SCHACHTER, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—The Senate, joining the House in a sharp legislative repudiation of White House leadership on a pressing environmental concern, voted 86 to 14 Wednesday to override President Reagan's veto of the \$20-billion Clean Water Act.

The override was the first of the month-old, Democratic-led 100th Congress and only the seventh of Reagan's six-year presidency. The measure now becomes law, authorizing federal aid for waste water projects in as many as 1,500 cities—including hundreds of millions of dollars to upgrade Los Angeles' troubled sewage treatment system.

Senators from both parties warned against viewing the override as a sign that Reagan, midway through his final term, had lost much of his clout.

'Bum Rap' for Reagan

"This will be widely interpreted throughout the United States as a reflection of the weakness of the presidency as a result of the Iran matter. I think that's a bum rap," said Sen. George J. Mitchell (D-Me.), who managed the override vote on the Senate floor. "But that's what makes this [veto] such an incredible act of bad judgment on the part of the President and the White House."

Sen. John H. Chafee (R-R.I.), who guided the clean water bill through the last session of Congress, said that Reagan retained his power to shape legislation and influence the congressional agenda, despite the overwhelming override vote.

"I just don't think this vote is indicative of anything in the future," Chafee said.

Foremost, the vote is evidence that the President is out of step with public support for improving the environment, Democrats said.

Only one Democrat, Sen. J.

James Exon of Nebraska, voted to uphold the veto.

Reagan criticized the measure last week as budget-busting, pork-barrel legislation, and Exon warned his colleagues that, by overriding the veto, they would be giving the President ammunition for continuing charges that Congress was responsible for the size of the federal deficit.

"Politically, if we override, we will have 'made his day,'" Exon said.

Republican critics of the legislation, led by Senate Minority Leader Bob Dole of Kansas, said that, by voting against the override, they were going on the record not against clean water but in favor of trimming the deficit.

"There is also such a thing as . . . pollution of the money supply, a pollution of fiscal policy, a pollution of the integrity of the credit of the United States," said Sen. Steven D. Symms (R-Ida.). "And we are literally piling debt upon debt upon debt."

1981 'Fact' Cited

But Mitchell said Congress simply was following through on a pact made with the President in 1981—when federal support for local sewage treatment projects was slashed to \$2.4 billion from \$5 billion annually—to maintain federal subsidies at a steady level for another decade.

"We made a bargain. We kept our end of it," Mitchell said. "The President did not."

Environmentalists cheered the Senate action, which followed a 401-26 House vote Tuesday to override the veto.

"The Clean Water Act has been one of the more successful pieces of environmental legislation," said David Baker, political director of

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House 'Rejects' Pay Raise but May Pocket It Anyway

By KAREN TUMULTY, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—Congressmen cast resounding votes Wednesday against a pay raise for themselves and other top government officials, but apparently in such a way that they will immediately start earning \$12,100 more a year anyway.

In the House, congressmen voted for a resolution disapproving the raise. But according to congressionally established procedures, such resolutions are effective only if they are passed within 30 days of pay raise recommendations by the President—and Wednesday was the 31st day.

Meanwhile, on the other side of Capitol Hill, the Senate passed legislation that would roll back the pay increase once it takes effect. But the Senate was comfortable in the knowledge that the legislation stands little chance in the House.

Sen. Pete Wilson (R-Calif.), one of the most outspoken opponents of the pay raises, called the House maneuver "one of the most baldly hypocritical that I've seen." But he conceded the Senate action "was not nearly what I had hoped."

Although opponents of the raises vowed to continue the fight either in court or with future legislation, Wilson conceded: "You can only give them so many chances. . . . I would guess now that [the increases] will go through."

Both the House and Senate measures that were adopted Wednesday were decided by voice votes. That made it virtually impossible to determine how individual members sided on the issue.

Pay increases are the touchiest of issues that Congress must

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Government Seen on Hold as Exodus of Talent Begins

By JAMES GERSTENZANG, Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON—A rash of resignations and expected departures has left the White House and the Pentagon facing shortages of senior personnel at a time when the Reagan Administration is already encountering difficulties in filling key jobs, sources in and out of the government say.

As a result, one student of the presidency said: "The opportunities for getting much done have declined radically."

Moreover, officials say, the political problems President Reagan faces—notably the Iran-contras scandal and the new Democratic majorities in both the Senate and House—are being compounded by both the exodus of veterans and the reluctance of new talent to join an Administration whose end is less than two years away.

In one instance, sources say, an

important White House position was filled only after the candidate, a government administrator who first rejected the job offer, was contacted directly by the President and was nearly ordered to accept the post.

And in a more public case, the White House called off its search for an outsider to replace ailing CIA Director William J. Casey, opting for Deputy Director Robert M. Gates, after former Sen. Howard H. Baker Jr. (R-Tenn.) rejected a tentative offer.

"Because of the Administration's problems, the impression left is that the rats are leaving a sinking ship," said Larry J. Sabato, a professor of government at the University of Virginia.

To be sure, every administration has experienced a spate of departures.

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Liberace, 67, Flamboyant Musical Showman, Dies

By TED THACKREY JR., Times Staff Writer

Liberace, the musical showman who cried all the way to the bank when critics were more impressed by his wardrobe than by his piano technique, died Wednesday at his home in Palm Springs.

He was 67, and his personal physician, Dr. Ronald Daniels, said death was due to congestive heart failure brought on by subacute encephalopathy, a general term for degenerative brain disease.

Gathered inside the house where Daniels pronounced the entertainer dead at 2:05 p.m. were Liberace's sister, Angelina Farrell; his sister-in-law, Dora Liberace, and Jamie Wyatt, described as Liberace's friend and longtime companion.

Outside were nearly 100 of his fans, who had begun their vigil when the seriousness of their idol's condition was first made known last week.



Liberace

Funeral arrangements were pending at Forest Lawn Memorial-Park, Hollywood Hills, where Liberace's brother and mother are

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Thackrey, Ted
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LIBERACE: Musical Showman Dies at Age 67 in Palm Springs

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entombed. A family spokesman said services will be private, but asked that contributions in lieu of flowers be made to the Liberace Foundation for the Creative and Performing Arts in Las Vegas, Nev. Plans for memorial services in Palm Springs and Las Vegas were incomplete.

Liberace had continued to work—a sellout engagement at the Radio City Music Hall, followed by appearances in New York City, Chicago, Dallas and Los Angeles promoting his new book, a full-color inventory of his many possessions called "The Wonderful Private World of Liberace"—until just a few weeks before his death. His last public appearance was on the "Oprah Winfrey Christmas Show," which was taped for television in mid-November.

Rumors of ill health first surfaced in mid-1986 and were reinforced late last month when his manager, Seymour Heller, announced cancellation of all engagements for the coming year.

Diet Initially Blamed

Liberace was admitted to Eisenhower Medical Center in nearby Rancho Mirage "for tests" late last month, but was released four days later. At that time, Heller said his client was suffering from anemia brought on by a watermelon weight-loss diet.

A newspaper in Las Vegas quoting unnamed sources reported, however, that the pianist was suffering from acquired immune deficiency syndrome. Heller vehemently denied this, demanded a retraction and threatened to sue the Las Vegas Sun for libel.

But within an hour after issuance of Daniel's cause of death statement Wednesday, Dr. Jay N. Cohn, head of the University of Minnesota Medical School's cardiovascular division, denied that there was or could be any direct relationship between encephalopathy and heart failure, while noting that a virus infection could both damage the heart and cause encephalopathy.

"AIDS," he added, "does indeed give you an encephalopathy."

Liberace's fans paid no attention to the bickering.

They crowded into a parking lot of a Catholic church across the street from Liberace's Spanish-style mansion trampling flower beds in their rush with members of the media to the door to hear all bulletins on the pianist's condition.

Attorney Joel Strote, who had acted as spokesman for the family during the last few days, was not pleased.

"I think that it is tragic," he said, "that this is turning into a circus. It doesn't seem very dignified. It is [Liberace's] wish that his fans remember him in his glory. He would like to die in peace."

But the fans didn't see it that way.

"He loved us, we loved him," said Sara Hempling, who had taken a week's vacation from her job in Seal Beach to join the crowd. "He'd want friends around. . . ."

Flamboyant and affected, scorned by the cynical as the Sultan of Schmaltz who "left no rhinestone unturned" in efforts to impress, Liberace was nonetheless respected in the entertainment field as one of the canniest showmen since P. T. Barnum.

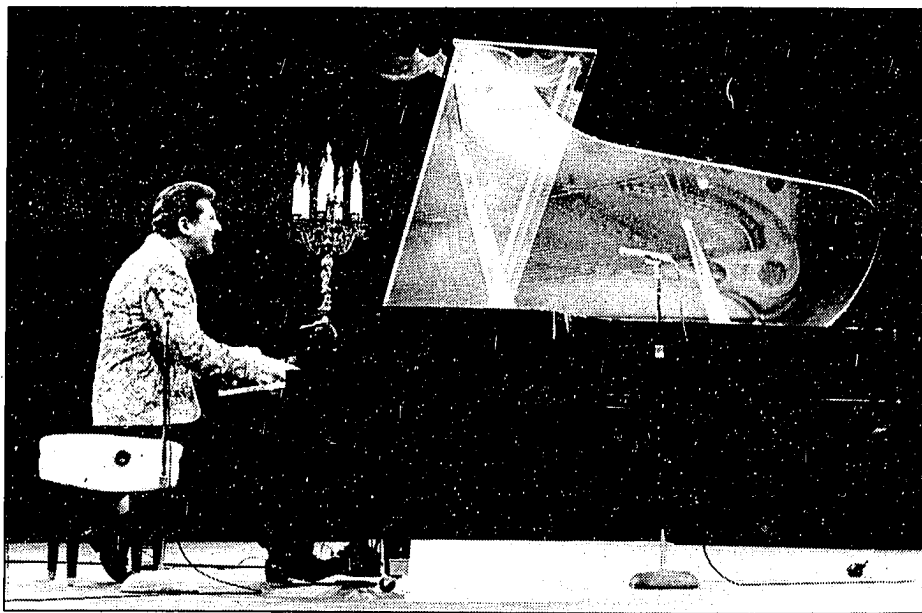
He had reached his peak in the late 1950s; his single starring role in films was not a success, and in recent years his main appeal had been to an aging audience of women whom one detractor characterized as "every mother who felt she had been disappointed by her son."

Yet it was death—and death alone—that finally set a term to a career that seemed always to be in mid-stride.

The ever-smiling performer who had made personal trademarks of a lighted candelabra and outrageously overstated attire had been playing piano professionally for nearly six decades, and he had been a headliner for more than half that time.

Bursting upon the national scene in the early 1950s with one of the first film-syndicated television shows, his appeal had seemed never to falter through the vicissitudes of record albums, concert tours and finally a nightclub act that packed showrooms year after year.

"Liberace is a four-letter word: STAR!" was a sign—and a slogan stenciled on T-shirts—at the former Las Vegas shopping center he rebuilt and operated as the Liberace Museum, and there is reason to suspect that he thought of himself



Los Angeles Times

A resplendent Liberace as he opened a show at the Carousel Theater in West Covina in 1965.

that way. And enjoyed every minute of it. . . .

"Musical critics haven't always been kind," he said in a 1981 interview, "and telling people that I didn't care what they said may not have been entirely accurate. No one is really immune. But the audiences seemed to enjoy the kind of performance I could give them."

"They kept coming back. . . and I kept trying to please them."

Wladziu (pronounced Vla-ja) Valentino Liberace was born May 16, 1919, in West Allis, Wis., and grew up in nearby Milwaukee where his mother, Frances, a pianist, ran a grocery store and his father, Salvatore (Sam), a former performer with the John Philip Sousa band, played French horn with the Milwaukee Philharmonic Orchestra.

Music in the Family

"In our house," he told an interviewer many years later, "music was as much a part of life as conversation. My father was born in Italy, and it wasn't just that he was a professional musician. My Polish mother's family were all musicians, too. So nobody was surprised—least of all me—when I could play piano by ear when I was 4 years old. It came with the territory."

At 7, he began formal piano studies, but his father did not approve. Despite his own musical background, Sam Liberace sternly admonished young Walter (as he was then known) to abandon any aspirations he might cherish for a career in music.

"He wanted me to be like my uncles," Liberace recalled. "One was a doctor. The other was an undertaker. . . but I wanted no part of anything that involved scalpels or pine boxes. . . so I sort of tuned out the lectures and kept practicing fingering technique."

All the same, the entertainer said, his father's lectures might have prevailed in the end if not for an old friend of his mother.

Ignace Paderewski, piano virtuoso and former premier of Poland, paid a visit and was effusive in his admiration for 7-year-old Walter's performance. Praise from such an exalted source was too much even for Sam Liberace, and from then on there was no hanging back.

By the time he was 15, Liberace was earning money as a professional pianist—playing for patrons of Milwaukee ice cream parlor and occasionally performing at high school concerts in the vicinity and with a small dance band where he billed himself as "Walter Busterkeys."

That was also the name he used when he jumped at the opportunity to perform with the WPA Symphony—a Depression-spawned cultural employment program—and won a scholarship to the Wisconsin College of Music.

Liberace never graduated, but members of the faculty were sufficiently impressed to arrange an audition with Frederick Stock, conductor of the Chicago Symphony, who signed the 16-year-old prodigy as a guest soloist when the orchestra arrived in Milwaukee on tour.

But an incident during a performance at LaCrosse, Wis., turned him in a new direction.

"The audience was a good one, interested and welcoming," he said,

"but the applause after the main performance was only just enough to rate one encore, and I decided to give them something to remember."

"Instead of 'Minute Waltz' or something like that, I played a novelty tune, 'Three Little Fishes,' that was very popular at the time, and followed with 'Mairzy Doats,' another well-known novelty, dressing them up in arpeggios and flourishes to give the impression that I was trying to pass them off as classics."

"It wasn't much of a joke. But the audience seemed to love it; they relaxed and enjoyed themselves and. . . they smiled. That was the big thing, for me. They smiled in a way that they hadn't for the straight classical repertoire, no matter how well I performed. And suddenly I had an idea of how to make piano playing pay more than the \$35 a week I'd been getting."

It was only a first step, but he followed it with a foray to New York. He had now acquired an agent, Mae Johnston, who booked him as intermission pianist at the Persian Room of the Plaza hotel, where a New York Sun reviewer heard him and thought his music "brilliant" and suitably "sprightly" for dinner and supper entertainment.

In the late 1930s and early '40s, Liberace (he had finally dropped all the other parts of his name, concentrating on the single patronymic) took his act on the road, incorporating light classical, popular and novelty numbers into hotel and supper room performances that now included occasional songs by the pianist.

"I'm breathy and not very loud," he said. "But at least I'm usually on key. . . ."

Complaints of Critics

Critics, especially those who usually reviewed purely classical music, complained of his "slackness of rhythms, wrong tempos, distorted phrasing and excess of prettification." But theater and club owners noticed a growing number of repeaters—true fans—in the Liberace audiences, and offered new bookings well in advance.

He became a crowd-pleasing raconteur, an inventive keyboard improviser—and, above all, a showman whose greatest talent may have been the ability to seize

upon any likely bit of business or stage property and make it uniquely his own.

One prime example occurred in 1944 when Cornel Wilde achieved stardom with the candelabra-lighted role of Frederic Chopin in "A Song to Remember."

Within a few days of the film's opening, Liberace had found a candelabra of his own, and it became a permanent fixture on the music rack of his gleaming, oversize Bluthner grand piano. By 1947, when he returned to the Persian Room at the Plaza—as the main attraction rather than intermission relief—he was appearing in faultless black evening clothes that lent a patina of elegance to an already striking presence.

Classicists still weren't satisfied; they accused him of "compressing" some works at the expense of musical coherence—and of avoiding those passages that presented technical problems of fingering and interpretation.

"Vladimir Horowitz takes eight minutes to get through a movement of the 'Moonlight Sonata,'" one critic wrote. "Liberace gets through it in three."

Liberace was undaunted. "If I play Tchaikovsky," he said, "I play his melodies. . . and skip his spiritual struggle."

His first booking in Las Vegas was at the old Last Frontier hotel, where he got a job in 1948 by deluging the entertainment manager with penny postcards extolling his own talents. His act was so successful that it attracted a kind of attention that the musician-showman had not anticipated.

"Hey, kid," said rival hotel owner Benjamin (Bugsy) Siegel, "I wanna talk to you!"

Siegel's offer was simple and direct—move to the Flamingo or try to play with broken fingers—and Liberace had almost decided it was one he couldn't refuse when the quandary was resolved by a higher power: On orders of the national crime commission, Siegel was shot to pieces at Virginia Hill's house in Beverly Hills.

"To this day," he said, recalling the incident later, "I don't know what I would have done if that hadn't happened."

Moving to Los Angeles in the 1950s, the Liberace brothers (George was now business manag-

er as well as musical director for the act) began to explore the possibilities of television.

Liberace began with "sustaining" (unpaid) appearances on station KLAC, acquired a sponsor after the first month, and was so well received that concert appearances at the Philharmonic Auditorium and Hollywood Bowl were sellouts.

"But still no national sponsor wanted to take a chance on me," the pianist said. "So it was an advertising man named Reub Kaufman who got the idea of putting my whole program on film and then shipping it around the country to let independent stations sell sponsorship to local advertisers. It was really one of the first true syndication shows in the world. . . ."

And it was an instant winner. Filmed before a live audience at the Music Hall Theater in Los Angeles, within a year the show was being aired on 192 stations (more than the networks could claim for their popular "Dragnet" and "Lucy" segments) and Liberace received two of the earliest national Emmy awards for the best entertainment program and most outstanding male personality of the year.

The show's popularity continued to expand with the passing years. In 1958, ABC began airing a daytime Liberace series, and there was an hourlong network summer show in 1969 (with guest stars and regulars Richard Wattis and Georgina Moon, who played his butler and maid in regular sketch sequences).

Any possible free time was filled with concert tours, where he tried out an increasingly outrageous wardrobe that grew in time to include one ermine coat (with rhinestone lining, worn during a command performance for the Queen of England) that weighed 136 pounds.

"Of course, it was all part of the act—not the real me," he told an interviewer in 1976. "I never wanted the public to get the impression that I really slept in sequined shorts or anything like that."

Yet he was never bashful about his tastes in clothing.

"Look me over," he said, preening before an audience after arrival on stage in a customized Rolls-Royce. "Don't be shy. Look! I didn't get dressed up like this to go unnoticed!"

Success led, some thought, to excess. He had homes ("marzipan mansions," one architectural purist

called them) in Malibu, Palm Springs, Las Vegas and New York; he owned 333 miniature pianos and more than 100 full-size ones, a fleet of automobiles and a collection of furniture that one connoisseur characterized as "world-class kitsch: every gilded imitation—antique that too much money can buy."

His private life became the subject of gossip: In 1959, he won a \$22,400 libel judgment against a London newspaper for printing allegations that he was a homosexual. In 1974, a former Moulin Rouge chorine sued him for what she called libelous characterization of their relationship in the first of his several autobiographies. And in 1982, a former Las Vegas dancer who had served as his chauffeur-bodyguard and companion sued him for palimony, claiming that he had entered upon a homosexual relationship with the performer on the promise of lifelong support.

Personal Burdens

Family relationships deteriorated. His parents were divorced in 1941. Brother George, who had led the orchestra and acted as foil for the pianist's humor during the early years of the television show, left to start a show of his own. He died in 1983. His parents and younger brother had died earlier and at the end his only close relative was his sister.

There were neighborhood quarrels. In the early 1970s, Liberace opened his home overlooking the Sunset Strip to the public as the Liberace Museum. But those who lived nearby complained that the excursions (at \$5.90 a head, proceeds going to a nonprofit foundation to encourage fledgling artists) were causing traffic jams. A plan to move the museum to his hometown of Milwaukee was foiled by legal problems, and he finally reopened the attraction in Las Vegas.

But there were also accolades: In 1983, the San Fernando Criminal Bar Assn. honored Liberace for his philanthropies in behalf of young musicians and the following year the Polish National Alliance sponsored an honorary doctor of music degree from Alliance College in Cambridge Springs, Pa.

And through it all, he continued to perform:

"People say I'm a workaholic," he said, "but that's not really true. I don't do anything I don't enjoy—and I find that it works very well. You know that bank I used to cry all the way to? Well, I bought it."